



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

State House  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1196  
401-222-2080

Donald L. Carcieri

Governor

November 9, 2009

TO THE HONORABLE, THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE:

In accordance with the provisions of Section 14, Article IX of the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island and Section 43-1-4 of the Rhode Island General Laws, I transmit without my signature, 2009 S 926, "An Act Relating to the Retirement of Police Officers of the Town of Westerly."

This bill amends various public laws relating to the retirement of police officers in the Town of Westerly. Section 5 of the Act provides that the entitlement to pension benefits by police officers shall be as provided for in applicable collective bargaining agreements.

While I concur with the provision to change the mandatory retirement age from twenty-five (25) years to thirty (30) years, I am deeply concerned that the language in this bill that would transfer the allocation of retirement benefits from a statute into the realm of collective bargaining agreements would have a long-term detrimental impact to the citizens of Westerly and to the citizens of Rhode Island. Consistent with R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-11-12, this Administration has taken the position that public employee pension benefits should be excluded from negotiation in collective bargaining agreements. I also have taken the position that State and municipal pension benefit changes must be carefully considered with the utmost consideration for the Rhode Island taxpayer.

Although I have significant concerns over the potential precedent set by this legislation, this bill is specific to Westerly and was approved by the Westerly Town Council. Therefore, I transmit without signature.

Sincerely,

Donald L. Carcieri  
Governor